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ABSTRACT

"We the People... Project Citizen" is a civic education program for Taiwanese middle school students that promotes informed and responsible participation in local government. A study evaluated the effects of the program on the civic skills and dispositions of adolescent students, explored factors associated with its effectiveness, and document teacher perceptions of "Project Citizen." The research employed a non-random, pretest-posttest comparison group, quasi-experimental design. Subjects were Taiwanese high school teachers (n=12), each with two classes of students, one experimental and one comparison. During the fall 2001 semester, the experimental students received instruction in "Project Citizen" as an adjunct to the traditional instruction of civics or "Three Principles of the People." The comparison students received traditional, discipline-based instruction that focused on the hierarchical model of knowledge acquisition. Hierarchical analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) of the posttest, using pretest as the covariate, indicated that students participating in "Project Citizen" significantly outperformed students in the comparison group in civic skills, political interest, and commitment to rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Factors significantly associated with the effect of "Project Citizen" on the civic skills and dispositions of Taiwanese adolescents included classroom climate and exposure to news of various resources. Qualitative analyses of teacher interviews revealed that all participating teachers responded positively to "Project Citizen" and showed interest in implementing it again in their classes. Results also revealed that time constraints, student abilities, and pressure from college entrance examinations posed significant challenges to implementation. (Contains 1 figure, 8 tables, 3 notes, and 85 references.) (Author/BT)

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The Effect of *We the People…Project Citizen* on the Civic Skills and Dispositions of Taiwanese Adolescent Students

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Abstract

We the People…Project Citizen is a civic education program for middle school students that promotes informed and responsible participation in local government. The purposes of this study were to evaluate the effects of *Project Citizen* upon the civic skills and dispositions of Taiwanese adolescent students, to explore factors associated with its effectiveness, and to document teachers' perceptions of *Project Citizen*.

This research employed a non-random, pretest-posttest comparison group, quasi-experimental design. Twelve Taiwanese high school teachers each with two classes of students, one experimental and one comparison, participated in this study. During the fall semester of 2001, the experimental students received instruction in *Project Citizen* as an adjunct to the traditional instruction of *Civics* or *Three Principles of the People*; the comparison students received traditional, discipline-based instruction that focused on the hierarchical model of knowledge acquisition.

Hierarchical ANCOVA of the posttest, using pretest as the covariate, indicated that students participating in *Project Citizen* significantly outperformed students in the comparison group in civic skills, political interest and commitment to rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Factors significantly associated with the effect of *Project Citizen* on the civic skills and dispositions of Taiwanese adolescents included classroom climate and exposure to news of various resources.

Qualitative analyses of the teacher interviews revealed that all participating teachers responded positively toward *Project Citizen* and showed interest in implementing it again in their classes. The results also suggested, however, that time constraints, students' abilities, and the pressure from the Joint College Entrance Examination, among other factors, pose significant challenges to implementing *Project Citizen* in the Taiwanese context. Valuable suggestions to address these challenges, such as correlating *Project Citizen* with current curriculum frameworks and simplifying the procedures and materials, were provided by the participating teachers.

Introduction

Constitutional democracy requires informed, effective, and responsible citizens for its maintenance and improvement. If the polity is to survive and thrive, citizens must have adequate knowledge of its principles and institutions, skills in applying this knowledge to civic life, and dispositions that incline them to protect individual rights and to promote the common good of the society (NAEP, 1996; Patrick, 1999a, 1999b; Vontz, Metcalf, & Patrick, 2000). Therefore, no one would question that to promote informed and responsible participation in civic life among a citizenry that is committed to the values and principles of constitutional democracy is the over-riding goal of civic education.

Preparation of democratic citizens is the unshirkable responsibility of the public school; the civic mission has long been acknowledged as a priority by the public and the academic community. The Committee of Ten in 1892 and the report of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education in 1918 affirmed citizenship as one of the cardinal principles of education. Likewise, the Conant report of 1945 asserted that the purpose of schools is to cultivate in the largest number of future citizens an appreciation for both the responsibilities of, and the benefits derived from, liberal democracy. These civic priorities were again reaffirmed more recently in the well-known *A Nation at Risk* report (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Brandt (1980) noted that "Preparation for citizenship is unquestionably a principal aim of education" (p.3); the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that comprise these citizens must be cultivated, and the cultivation is the unique assignment of civic education in the public school (Vontz et al., 2000). Tyler (1993) held a similar perspective concerning the civic goal of education. As he put it

> The most generally accepted goal of American education is to help all young people to learn the attitudes, knowledge, skills, and habits necessary for citizens who are to participate intelligently in the responsibilities of a democratic society (p.74).

Although the civic mission of education has been accepted for more than a century, there is no consensus as to what characteristics are constitutive of the good citizen or how best to accomplish the civic mission in education (Citizenship Education and Peace Project, 1990; A Generation Adrift, 1990). It is no wonder, then, that educators find it difficult to agree upon the best instructional strategies for achieving "the elusive goal" (Butler, 1995, p.3). More perplexing, however, is the knowledge that a great deal of research has established guidelines for good practice (e.g., Button, 1972; Ehman, 1980; Guyton, 1982; Remy, 1972), but the typical contemporary classroom uses instructional strategies that are insufficient for developing skills and dispositions beyond those of knowledge acquisition and comprehension (Boyer, 1983; Goodlad, 1984). This problem was also indicated by Engle and Ochoa (1988):

> It is our observation that current practices of citizenship education in both elementary and secondary schools place undue emphasis on content and methods that foster rote memory and unreasoned loyalty (p.32).

As Taiwan is in transition from a "hard authoritarianism" to a "soft authoritarianism" (Wincker, 1984, p. 482) and moving toward a constitutional democracy, the efficacy of citizenship education is even more crucial. After the termination of martial law in 1987, a series of political reforms have taken place in Taiwan, including revision of the Constitution, re-election of parliament members, and direct presidential elections. These political changes indicate that cultivating the knowledge, dispositions and skills that are indispensable for enhancing the development of democracy, guaranteeing the rule of law, and fostering the participant perspective is the main task of current civic education (National Taiwan Normal University Department of Civic Education, 1997).

Civic education in Taiwan, however, faces formidable barriers, most notably a gap between pedagogical theory and classroom practice, and a conventional instructional emphasis upon the acquisition of factual knowledge concerning the framework of the political system, rather than stressing actual civic participation. These obstacles, among others, impede the civic development of the Taiwanese people and inhibit the flourishing of Taiwan's newly-emerging constitutional democracy.

Statement of the Problem

Research has shown agreement among practitioners and specialists that civics-related courses should be participatory, interactive, related to life in the school and community, conducted in a non-authoritarian environment, cognizant of social diversity, and co-constructed with parents and the community (Deng, Wen, Chang, & Doong, 1997; Doong, 2001; Liou, 2000; Torney-Purta, Schwille, & Amadeo, 1999). Therefore, encouraging students to become actively participating citizens is a central goal of citizenship education (Langton, 1988; National Council for the Social Studies, 1981; 1994). If the goal of civic education is to cultivate informed, effective, and responsible participatory citizens who are able and willing to protect individual rights and to promote the common good of the society, the curriculum and instruction of civic education in Taiwan needs to be altered to better reflect these characteristics.

As a civic educator, I am concerned about the civic education of Taiwanese students and the improvement of Taiwan's civic education. In the summer of 2000, I was a research intern in the Social Studies Development Center of Indiana University and helped the Center analyze a quasi-experimental study of *Project Citizen and the Civic Development of Adolescent Students in Indiana, Latvia, and Lithuania*. I was impressed by its effectiveness in promoting adolescent students' civic development. Examination of the rationale and characteristics of *Project Citizen* suggests that *Project Citizen* can be used as a curriculum supplement to remedy some of the weaknesses of Taiwan's civic education.

Although previous research has shown that *Project Citizen* positively impacts the civic development of adolescent students (Liou, 2002; Soule, 2000; Tolo, 1998; Vontz, Metcalf, & Patrick, 2000), these studies should be interpreted with caution because of flaws in the research design (e.g. Seoul, 2000; Tolo, 1998), poor measurement instruments (e.g. Vontz, et al., 2000), and limited special samples (e.g. Liou, 2002). In order to evaluate the effects of *Project Citizen* upon the civic development of Taiwanese adolescents, a sound research design that employs valid and reliable instrumentation is necessary.

Additionally, to achieve the maximum effect of *Project Citizen*, further research into the factors influencing its implementation is imperative. Teachers' perceptions and opinions of how to improve *Project Citizen* are helpful for adapting *Project Citizen* to Taiwan's educational environment and culture. Every country has its specific educational tradition and culture. What works in one cultural context cannot be simply adopted in another setting with differing traditions, values, and meanings (Hahn, 1998). *Project Citizen* is a product of the United States. Although it has been implemented in various countries, without culturally-sensitive revisions it may not be suitable for the Taiwanese context. Therefore, how to successfully adopt *Project Citizen* for use in Taiwan is an important object of research.

Finally, recent research on the civic development of Taiwanese adolescents was mainly based on correlational studies or inappropriate analysis of a few small-scale quasi-experimental studies. As was stressed by Fraenkel and Wallen (2000), correlational studies *do not*, in and of themselves, establish cause-and-effect relationship; no cause-and-effect relationship can be inferred from correlational studies alone. Quasi-experiments, or true experiments, in contrast, are the best way to establish cause-and-effect relationship between variables; the causal inference, however, results only from the *appropriate* analysis of *well-designed* experiments or quasi-experiments. Although a few quasi-experimental studies have been conducted in Taiwan to investigate specific civics instruction methods (value-clarification, issues-centered approach, and cooperative learning) on the civic development of Taiwanese adolescents, these were small-scale studies, with sample sizes ranging from 154 to 163 students (Chang, Wu, & Liou,1999; Chen, 1995; Liao, Liu, & Doong, 1998). Furthermore, the findings of these studies were based on inappropriate statistical analysis of the data (e.g., using individual students as the unit of analysis, but not taking account the fact that individual students are nested in classes). Therefore, the accuracy of these studies' findings must be judged as questionable.

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study were to evaluate the effects of *Project Citizen* upon the civic skills and dispositions of Taiwanese adolescent students using a statistically appropriate analytical model, to explore factors associated with its effectiveness, and to document teachers' perceptions of *Project Citizen*. Specifically, the objectives were:

1. to assess the effect of *Project Citizen* on Taiwanese adolescent students' attainment of civic skills,
2. to assess the effect of *Project Citizen* on Taiwanese adolescent students' attainment of civic dispositions,
3. to identify personal-related, family-related, school-related, and society-related factors associated with the effect of *Project Citizen* on the civic skills of Taiwanese adolescent students,
4. to identify personal-related, family-related, school-related, and society-related factors associated with the effect of *Project Citizen* on the civic dispositions of Taiwanese adolescent students, and
5. to document teachers' perceptions of *Project Citizen*.

Significance of the Study

This study bridges three fields, citizenship education, research methodology, and comparative education, and contributes to many facets of citizenship education. First, in this study quantitative methods are supplemented with qualitative data to gain an in-depth understanding of the effects of *Project Citizen*. This study employs questionnaires and the quantitative analysis of a pretest and posttest in combination with the qualitative analysis of teacher interviews. By triangulating data derived from various sources, a more comprehensive picture of the effect of *Project Citizen* is obtained than was previously available.

Second, the study will introduce and demonstrate a statistically appropriate analytical model that is well suited to educational research incorporating the hierarchical (nested) design of experiments or quasi-experiments. For administrative reasons, it is impractical, if not impossible, to randomly select and assign individual students into different treatment conditions; typically, all students in a particular classroom experience the same treatment. The use of a hierarchical design enables a researcher to isolate the nuisance variable of classes (Kirk, 1995). This necessary refinement for analysis has been, for the most part, neglected by educational researchers.

Third, the evaluation of the effect of *Project Citizen* in Taiwan will allow Taiwanese civics educators to consider whether or not an issues-centered civic education is feasible in the Taiwanese setting. If *Project Citizen* positively affects the civic skills and dispositions of Taiwanese adolescents, it may suggest that *Project Citizen*, an issues-centered curriculum, can be used and popularized as a supplementary curriculum to teach high school *Civics* and/or the *Three Principles of the People*.

Fourth, the findings of this study will allow civics educators to think about how to maximize the effectiveness of *Project Citizen*. By investigating factors associated with the effectiveness of *Project Citizen*, we are able to identify how selected factors may facilitate or impede its effectiveness in Taiwan. Then, we will be able to better organize and deliver *Project Citizen* in a way that maximizes its effect.

Finally, this study will also contribute to cross-cultural understanding of the effects of *Project Citizen* by providing new data on Taiwanese adolescent students. Currently the effect of *Project Citizen* has been shown in the United States as well as in several Eastern European countries. The study of the effects of *Project Citizen* on the civic skills and dispositions of Taiwanese adolescent students will expand our knowledge of *Project Citizen*'s effects in Asia.

Definition of Terms

Project Citizen is an issues-centered civic education program developed by the Center for Civic Education (CCE). The program is designed to encourage civic development among adolescent students through intensive study of a school or a community issue. In this study, *Project Citizen* was taught in 12 classes of Taiwan's high school students.

Civic Skills are those intellectual and participatory capacities that enable active involvement in civic life (Vontz, et al., 2000). Civic skills are operationally defined as the mean score of the 11 items of 6-point Likert-type Adolescent Student Civic Skills Scale (ASCSS). Higher scores indicate more civic skills.

Civic Dispositions are those traits of public and private character that contribute to both the political efficacy of the individual and the common good of society (Vontz, et al., 2000). Civic dispositions are operationalized by summating the mean scores derived from the following four subscales of Adolescent Student Civic Dispositions Scale (ASCDS): Political Interest, Propensity to Participate in Future Political Life, Commitment to Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship, and Sense of Political Efficacy. Higher scores imply more positive civic dispositions.

Political Interest, the degree to which one monitors and is attentive to politics and the government, is important to maintaining a democratic society and is requisite to stimulating political participation (Vontz, et al., 2000). Political Interest is operationally defined as the mean score on a 9-item 6-point Likert-type subscale of the ASCDS. Higher scores indicate higher interest.

Propensity to Participate in Future Political Life is the degree to which one believes s/he is likely to participate in political life (for example, voting, participating in civic groups, running for office) in the future (Vontz, et al., 2000). It is operationally defined as the mean score on a 12-item 6-point Likert-type subscale of the ASCDS. Higher scores indicate higher propensity to participate in future political life.

Commitment to the Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship, according to Vontz et al. (2000), is the degree to which one is resolved to employ citizenship rights (for example, the right to vote, free speech, equality before the law) and the degree to which one is resolved to fulfill the obligations of citizenship (for example, paying taxes, obeying laws, participating in civic life to promote the common good). Commitment to Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship is operationally defined as the mean score on an 11-item 6-point Likert-type subscale of the ASCDS. Higher scores indicate more committed to the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Sense of Political Efficacy is an attitude which is viewed by some to be necessary for the persistence of a democracy (Ehman, 1969a). According to Ehman, political efficacy refers to "the feeling of a person that he or she will have some influence on governmental decision-making, that he is able to understand the political system, and that those occupying political positions of power care about the opinions and actions of people like him" (p. 16-17). Sense of Political Efficacy is operationally defined as the mean score on a 6-item 6-point Likert-type subscale of the ASCDS. Higher scores indicate a greater sense of political efficacy.

Classroom Climate, according to Ehman (1969a; 1969b), is the extent to which students perceive that their social studies teachers dealt with social problems, discussed both sides of issues, and took neutral positions on issues. The Classroom Climate is operationally defined as the mean score on a 4-item 6-point Likert-type Classroom Climate Scale (CCS). Higher scores represent a more open climate.

Civic Education in Taiwan

Taiwan has experienced dramatic political changes in recent years. These political changes indicate that Taiwan is moving toward a more open and democratic society. Therefore, the main tasks of current civic education are to educate and cultivate in people the knowledge, skills, and dispositions indispensable for the development of democracy and the rule of law, and to foster a participant perspective. However, civic education in Taiwan faces significant barriers to reaching the goals of civic education. These obstacles are as follows.

Promotionism. Promotionism, the stress on passing entrance examination to go to the better senior high schools and further on to college and university, has induced problems on the entire educational process in schools. The vast majority of Taiwanese feel that a young person's first priority in life is to achieve a high score on the Joint College Entrance Examination (JCEE) and nothing is more important than being admitted to a good college. Teaching and learning in schools, therefore, are driven by texts and exams that encourage and promote dogmatic teaching methods and rote memorization. That is to say, civic education in Taiwan emphasizes citizens' awareness and cognitive knowledge of the political system, at the expense of actual civic participation (Liu, 1999).

Discipline-oriented structure. Civic education in Taiwan adopted the social science discipline-oriented approach (Barr, Barth & Shermis, 1978). This focus on the disciplinary structures of knowledge makes it difficult to promote the goal of reflective inquiry. In the discipline-oriented approach, students are encouraged to examine key facts, concepts, and principles in each discipline; this offers few opportunities for students to develop their critical thinking skills. Another disadvantage of the discipline-oriented approach is that it neglects students' needs, interests, and experiences (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1993). In addition, this approach does not reflect the reality of life outside school, nor does it integrate the humanities in the exploration of the meaning of human experience.

Traditional teaching methods. Although many new instructional theories and techniques have been introduced in Taiwan, research has shown that classroom teaching is still dominated by traditional lecture and large-group instruction (Chang, 1993; Liao, Liu, & Doong, 1998; Liu, 1999, National Taiwan Normal University Department of Civic Education, 1991; 1997). One of the reasons is that many teachers are not familiar with instructional approaches other than lecture method. The demanding nature of their job is another constraint limiting the use of innovative teaching styles that are more appropriate for civic education. In the classroom, students have very few opportunities to practice making moral decisions or to develop critical judgment. Their thinking abilities and participation skills are rarely exercised and challenged. As a consequence, students lack the thinking abilities and participatory skills that are prerequisites for the healthy functioning of democracy.

Since Taiwan's civic education continues to face these obstacles, the goal of adequately preparing democratic citizens through education is not being fulfilled. Although students in Taiwan possess civic knowledge, they lack the civic skills and dispositions that are equally necessary for healthy democratic participation. Civic education in Taiwan can and should make a difference. The primary focus should not rely on memorizing facts; instead, it should emphasize genuine civic participation. To prepare students to deal with and shape the future, civic education in Taiwan should be transformed so as to reflect the requirements of democratic citizenship.

Project Citizen

Project Citizen is a civic education program for middle school students that promotes competent and responsible participation in local governments. The program was originally developed by the Center for Civic Education in 1992 under the name of American Youth Citizenship Portfolio Project (Tolo, 1998). In the 1995-96 school year, the program was implemented as a pilot in 12 states under its present form as *Project Citizen*. Since then the domestic program has expanded to include schools in every state as well as American Samoa, the District of Columbia, and Guam. As of August 2000, approximately 3,800 teachers had used *Project Citizen* with approximately 232,000 students (Center for Civic Education, 2001).

The widespread use of *Project Citizen* is not limited to the United States. As a part of *Civitas: An International Civic Education Exchange Program* administered by the Center for Civic Education, *Project Citizen* has been translated into various languages and implemented in more than thirty countries throughout the world (Center for Civic Education, 2001).

Goals and Anticipated Outcomes of *Project Citizen*

Since the main purpose of this study is to evaluate the effect of *Project Citizen* on the civic skills and dispositions of Taiwanese adolescent students, it is reasonable to ask: What are the civic skills and dispositions that *Project Citizen* intends to develop? These questions need to be addressed prior to a formal evaluation of *Project Citizen*.

According to its developers, the goal of *Project Citizen* is to motivate and empower adolescents to exercise their rights and to accept the responsibilities of democratic citizenship through the intensive study of a local community problem. Specifically, *Project Citizen* is designed to help adolescents:

- learn how to monitor and influence public policy in their communities;
- learn the public policy-making process;
- develop concrete skills and the foundation needed to become responsible participating citizens;
- develop effective and creative communication skills;
- develop more positive self-concepts and confidence in exercising the rights and responsibilities of citizenship (Center for Civic Education, 2000).

Process and Content of *Project Citizen*

Project Citizen focuses on the role of state and local governments. The curriculum involves an entire class of students in a series of structured, cooperative learning activities guided by their teachers and adult volunteers.

Working in cooperative teams, the class learns to interact with their government through a five-step process that includes:

- ***Identifying a problem to study***. Students begin by identifying a problem in their community that they think is important and determining which level of government is most directly responsible for dealing with the problem.
- ***Gathering information***. Once the class has decided upon the problem they want to study, they will gather and evaluate information about the problem from a variety of sources.
- ***Examining solutions***. Students then examine public policies that are currently in effect. They also will examine policies being suggested by other people.
- ***Developing their own public policy***. Students develop a public policy that they think their government should adopt.
- ***Developing an action plan***. Students develop a plan of action to show how they might influence the appropriate government or governmental agency to adopt their proposed public policy (Center for Civic Education, 1998).

At the conclusion of the program the class will use the materials they have gathered and written as they accomplished these tasks to develop a class portfolio. The portfolio is an organized collection of information consisting of the class plan related to the public policy issue they have chosen. According to the student textbook, the portfolio consists of two sections: a display section and a documentation section (Center for Civic Education, 1998).

> ***Display section***. For this section the work of each of the four groups should be placed on a separate panel of the four-panel display. The display should be developed so it can be placed on a table, bulletin board, or an easel. Materials to be displayed may include written statements, list of sources, charts, graphs, photographs, original art works, and so forth.[1]

[1] For a detailed description of the requirements of each group's section of the portfolio, see pages 27-32 in the student text.

Documentation section. Each of the four groups should select from the materials gathe those which best document or give evidence of their research. Materials included in the document section should represent samples of the most important and/or significant resea they have completed. Not all research should be included (p.24).

Characteristics of *Project Citizen*

Through the previous description, it is obvious that *Project Citizen* promotes several characteristics of effective democratic citizenship education. First, *Project Citizen* is a student-centered civics program. Rather than preparing students for future roles, *Project Citizen* values students' interests and needs of current concern. In the program, students themselves select a community problem or issue that is of interest to them, and then they spend a great deal of time a effort on developing their portfolio. During the entire inquiry process, teachers allow students considerable autonomy. Their role is to guide the students through the process but not to interfere students' initiative to address the issue. Since *Project Citizen* allows students to have greater ownership of learning, they are highly motivated to work through the inquiry process.

Second, *Project Citizen* is an issues-centered curriculum. *Project Citizen* involves studen the selection and investigation of important public issues in their community. Students have to w cooperatively to define the public issue of concern, and to justify and defend their proposal for resolution of the issue. Throughout the process they are provided with many opportunities to mak decisions and to exercise their critical thinking skills, from the identification of the problem to th formation of consensus upon an action plan. Students also learn to deal with the problem or issue occurs in the genuine context of social life (as opposed to an "artificial" academic exercise). Thu through the collaborative inquiry process of *Project Citizen*, civic learning becomes more meanin to the students.

Third, *Project Citizen* is based on cooperative learning. In order to develop the best class portfolio, the entire class of students is involved in a series of structured, cooperative learning activities that are guided by their teachers and adult volunteers. With the help of teachers and community and parent volunteers, students work in cooperative groups to accomplish each of the following tasks (Center for Civic Education, 1998).

Group 1: ***Examine the problem***. The group is responsible for explaining the problem th class has chosen to study. The group also should explain why the problem is important a why that level of government or governmental agency should deal with it.
Group 2: ***Evaluating alternative policies to deal with the problem***. This group is respon for explaining present and/or alternative policies designed to solve the problem.
Group 3: ***Developing a public policy the class will support***. This group is responsible fo developing and justifying a specific public policy that the majority of the class agrees to support.
Group 4: ***Developing an action plan to get government to accept the class policy***. This group is responsible for developing an action plan showing how citizens can influence th government to adopt the policy the class supports (pp.24-25).

Although each group of students has a specific task, in order to successfully complete the program the groups have to share ideas and information. Each group must keep the entire class informed of its progress and work cooperatively with the other groups in order for the class to be able to develop the best portfolio possible.

Finally, *Project Citizen* is a civic education program that utilizes authentic performance assessment. Participating in *Project Citizen*, students are required to use the materials they have gathered and written to develop a class portfolio (Center for Civic Education, 1998). In the portfolio, they have to use their knowledge to defend a position or explain a choice they have made in a meaningful way. These are extremely valuable and necessary life skills. The performance assessment system helps teachers find out "how well students can translate knowledge into action" (Parker & Jarolimek, 1997, p. 282).

As we consider the goals and characteristics of *Project Citizen* and the problems facing Taiwan's civic education, it seems that *Project Citizen* can be used as a curriculum supplement to remedy some of the weaknesses of Taiwan's civic education and to help Taiwan prepare participatory citizens. Consequently, this quasi-experimental study was conducted to evaluate the effects of *Project Citizen* on the civic skills and dispositions of adolescent students in Taiwan.

Review of Related Research

This research review focuses on the empirical findings concerning the impact of *Project Citizen* upon the civic development of adolescents and factors related to adolescent civic development. The review not only provides the researcher with the opportunity to learn the strengths and weaknesses of the research design of each of the studies but also provides further justification for this research. Moreover, it provides the research-based context within which the results are presented and interpreted.

Research on the Effectiveness of *Project Citizen*

Since its birth, few studies have been conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of *Project Citizen*. Tolo's (1998) study provided the first comprehensive look at *Project Citizen* and its implementation throughout the United States. He used surveys to gather information from 381 students in 20 *Project Citizen* classes. Tolo's research showed that students like using *Project Citizen* and believe it helps them learn valuable skills and information. Although Tolo's research provides insights into the perceived effects of *Project Citizen* on students' civic development from the teachers and students who used the program, his study is not comparative. From Tolo's research, we have no idea whether the civic development of students who participated in *Project Citizen* was different from those who did not participate in *Project Citizen*.

Soule (2000) examined the effects of *Project Citizen* on the civic development of students in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In May 1999, 1,991 students were surveyed; approximately half had

participated in *Project Citizen*, half had not. Using a matching comparison group, Soule found that students participating in *Project Citizen* have a significant improvement in political skills and knowledge, political attitudes conducive to participatory democracy, and values supportive of democracy. Soule's research showed positive results for participating students across the three dimensions measured: political skills and knowledge, political attitudes, and values supportive of democracy; the conclusions of this study, however, need to be treated with skepticism. The political skills and knowledge, political attitudes, and values of students in both groups might have been different from each other before the students of the treatment group participated in *Project Citizen*; however, the initial difference between the treatment group and the comparison group was not taken into account.

To avoid the weaknesses of the previous two studies and to improve the credibility of claims regarding the effectiveness of *Project Citizen*, Vontz, Metcalf, and Patrick (2000) used a pre-test/post-test quasi-experimental design. Their study involved a total of 102 classes (51 treatment and 51 comparison) and 1,412 students (712 treatment and 700 comparison) in three political units: Indiana in the United States, Latvia, and Lithuania. The results of their study revealed that *Project Citizen* positively and significantly affects students' civic development. Specifically, after accounting for pretest differences, students participating in *Project Citizen* showed a statistically significant and positive improvement in civic knowledge and civic skills. In addition, students participating in *Project Citizen* showed statistically significant and positive improvement in propensity to participate in political and civic life. Compared to Tolo's and Soule's research, Vontz, Metcalf and Patrick's study is better designed and conducted. However, the low reliabilities of some of the subscales of the Civic Development Inventory[2] call the findings of their research into question.

Research by Liou (2002) was the first attempt to employ qualitative approaches to study the effectiveness of *Project Citizen*, to identify conditions influencing its implementation, and to explore the teacher's and students' perceptions of *Project Citizen* in a Midwestern township. A discovery was that the teacher and the students had positive perceptions of *Project Citizen*. The result confirmed the earlier findings of Tolo (1998). Another significant finding was that *Project Citizen*, as suggested by previous research (Tolo, 1998; Soule, 2000; Vontz, et al., 2000), has positive impacts on students' civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions; it also showed positive impact on some of the psychological traits such as self-efficacy and self-regulation. *Project Citizen* was perceived by the teacher and most students to be a good way to learn civic education; however, several factors such as teachers' teaching loads, classroom management difficulties and the need for teacher training have impeded its adoption. Although Liou's study suggested the positive impact of *Project Citizen*, it should be noted that her study was solely based on students of one gifted class. The generalizability of her study, therefore, is limited.

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[2] The Alpha coefficient for the Civic Knowledge subscale, the Commitment to Responsibilities, and the Political Interest subscale are .57, .51, and .51 respectively.

Research on Factors Related to Adolescent Civic Development

The second part of the review focuses on factors associated with the intended outcomes of *Project Citizen*. Most of the studies concerning the influence of family factors upon the civic development of adolescents suggested that parents have a positive impact on their children's civic development (Huang, 1994; National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1999; Niemi & Chapman,1999; Niemi & Junn, 1998; Torney, Oppenheim, & Farnen, 1975; Torney-Purta et al, 2001). However, few parents could entirely determine the political orientation of their children (Cheng, 2001; Chen, 1994; Weissberg, 1974). Therefore, although the family plays an important role in the process of adolescents' political socialization, it seems insufficient to predict adolescent civic development simply based on family experiences.

The school's function is both a primary and secondary agent of political socialization (Chen, 1993). In schools, there are some manifest and systematic programs for teaching specified political information, attitudes, and values. In contrast, some of the political messages are latent, or transmitted in unintended ways (Ehman, 1969a; Wasburn, 1986). The school-related variables that influence students' civic development include grade level, classroom climate (Baughman, 1975; Blankshenship, 1990; Ehman, 1969a; 1969b; 1970; 1980; Hahn, 1998; Hahn & Tocci, 1990; Harwood, 1991; Torney-Purta et al., 2001), participation in school governance and experience of extracurricular activities (Beck, 1977; Chang, 1993; Niemi & Chapman, 1999; Niemi & Junn, 1998). Selected teachers' characteristics (Chang, 1993; Huang, 1997; NAEP, 1999; Sheen, Lu & Chou, 1998; 1999) and formal civic instruction (Brody, 1994; Chang, Wu & Liou, 1999; Chen, 1995; Liao, Liu & Doong, 1998; Patrick, 1972; Soule, 2000; Vontz et al., 2000) also make a difference in the democratic attitudes, skills, and knowledge learned by students.

Increasingly, mass media has become a more crucial societal factor, occupying, at present, a significant portion of children's or adolescents' attention. Therefore, mass media is becoming increasingly important in the civic development of adolescents (Chaffee & Becker, 1975; Chaffee, Jackson-Beeck, Durall, & Wilson, 1977; Connell, 1971; Dominick, 1972; Garramone & Atkin, 1986; Porter, 1978; Wang, 2000).

The importance of each of these factors on the civic development of students has been identified in the research literature; however, the findings of these studies have sometimes been conflicting. Vontz et al's study (2000) investigated the influence of most of the factors on the effectiveness of *Project Citizen*. However, because of the small usable sample size (usable n = 192) and problems of accuracy in measuring some variables, none of the factors was found to be significant. Larger sample size and appropriate measures are necessary to establish valid conclusions concerning the program's efficacy in civic education.

Additionally, the emphasis of most studies in Taiwan was on the relative impact of selected factors within one category upon the civic development of adolescents. Influences upon civic development, however, do not come exclusively from variables within one category. In the United

States considerable studies have been conducted to examine the impact of these factors from a more comprehensive perspective; few studies of this type, however, have been undertaken in Taiwan. This study, with its focus on the effectiveness of an issues-centered civic curriculum, *Project Citizen*, also sought to investigate, in a more comprehensive manner, the factors related to the effectiveness of the *Project Citizen* program. The following variables were included: (1) gender, (2) grade level, (3) confidence in attending college, (4) literacy resource available at home, (5) parent education, (6) students' frequency of extracurricular participation, (7) teacher's education, (8) professional development (participation in *Project Citizen* workshop), (9) teaching experience, (10) classroom climate, and (11) exposure to news of various media resources.

Methodology

This research employed a hierarchical non-random, pretest-posttest comparison group design (see Figure 1). The design is hierarchical because each class appeared with only one level of the treatment (either in *Project Citizen* in addition to regular *Civics* or *Three Principles of the People* instruction, or in regular *Civics or Three Principles of the People* instruction). Twelve Taiwanese high school teachers each with two classes of students, one experimental and one comparison, participated in this study.

	Pre-test	Intervention	Post-test
Experimental classes (using *Project Citizen* in addition to traditional *Civics* or *Three Principles of the People* instruction)	Y1	X	Y2
Comparison classes (using traditional *Civics* or *Three Principles of the People* instruction)	Y3		Y4

Explanation:

Y1: Pretest of experimental classes
Y2: Posttest of experimental classes
X: Intervention of *Project Citizen*
-----: Non-random assignment of students (Intact classes)
Y3: Pretest of comparison classes
Y4: Posttest of comparison classes

Figure 1 The experimental design for the study

Quantitative and qualitative methods were combined to address the research questions. According to Merriam (1998), whereas the experimental design is more appropriate for a cause-and-effect investigation, "how" and "why" questions are best answered by qualitative inquiry. In this study quantitative methods were used to evaluate the effect of *Project Citizen* on the civic skills and dispositions of Taiwanese adolescent students and the factors associated with its effectiveness. Qualitative methods were used to provide in-depth descriptions of teachers' perceptions of *Project*

Citizen, to better understand the process of *Project* Citizen, and to explore possible explanations for the quantitative data.

Participants

Participating schools and classes. Originally, 13 schools with two classes from each school participated in the study. The characteristics of the 13 schools are summarized in Table 1. However, the experimental class in one school chose to withdraw from the study before the students completed the posttest. All students of the experimental class and students in the comparison class from the school were excluded from the final analysis. Therefore the final sample consisted of the 952 participants for which there were complete pretest and posttest data on all variables; analysis was based on data from students in 24 classes of 12 senior high schools across the nation.

Table 1
Characteristics of the participating schools and classes

School [a]	Location	Type	Grade	Subject implementing *Project Citizen*
Loyal	N	B	11	TPOTP
Filial	N	G	10	TPOTP
Merciful	N	Co	11	Civics
Just	N	Co	10	TPOTP
Harmonious	N	Co	11	Civics
Gentle	N	B	10	TPOTP
Virtuous	C	Co	11	Civics
Reverent	C	G	10	TPOTP
Frugal	C	Co	10	TPOTP
Courteous	S	B	11	Civics
Wise	S	Co	10	TPOTP
Honest [b]	E	G	11	Civics
Brave	E	Co	10	TPOTP

Note: N: Northern Taiwan; C: Central Taiwan; S: Southern Taiwan; E: Eastern Taiwan; B: boys' school; G: Girls' school; Co: school having students of both genders; TPOTP: *Three Principles of the People*.
[a] Pseudonyms were used to present the participating schools.
[b] Dropped from study.

Participating teachers. The characteristics of the 13 teachers are summarized in Table 2. All participating teachers are female and civics majors and their teaching experience ranges from five years to 21 years. Most of the participating teachers taught at junior high schools several years before they taught at senior high schools. Currently, all the teachers teach both *Civics* and *Three Principles of the People*.

Table 2
Characteristics of the participating teachers

Teacher [a]	Education	Teaching Experience	*Project Citizen* Workshop
Amanda	Bachelor	5 years	3 days
Cindy	Master	5 years	None
Lily	Master	11 years	None
Debbie	40 credits of master-level courses	13 years	3 days
Rebecca	Bachelor	5 years	3 days
Linda	40 credits of master-level courses	15 years	1 day
Jessica	40 credits of master-level courses	21 years	1 day
Susan	Mater; Doctoral student	7 years	3 days
Jenny	Master	7 years	1 day
Teresa	Master	6 years	None
Melissa	Master	7 years	None
Jane [b]	Bachelor	9 years	None
May	40 credits of master-level courses; Master student	9 years	1 day

[a] Pseudonyms were used to present the participating teachers.
[b] Dropped from study.

Participating students. At first 1,108 students nested within 26 classes participated in the study. 42 students of one experimental class chose to withdraw from the study before they completed the instruction of *Project Citizen*; therefore 42 students in this class and 42 students in its corresponding comparison class were withdrawn from the study. Additionally, of the remaining 1,024 students, 21 students did not take the pretest and 19 students did not take the posttest; therefore, they were excluded from the final analysis. Moreover, 32 students had missing data. After reviewing these 32 students' original questionnaires, it was found that all the 32 students did not respond to at least one page of the questionnaire. This most likely resulted from the double-sided printing of the questionnaires; the students might not have noticed the reverse page, and therefore did not respond to the full questionnaire. According to Little and Rubin (1987), missing data of this kind should be considered as data that are missing completely at random (MCAR). Since there were only 32 cases having missing data (less than 3%) and they were considered MCAR, the 32 cases were also excluded from the final analyses. Therefore, the final usable sample of this study consisted of 952 students.

Independent sample chi-square tests were performed to examine whether selected categorical background factors of the experimental and comparison groups were different. The result was presented in Table 3. Furthermore, independent sample *t*-tests were conducted to test the differences in baseline civic skills and dispositions between the experimental and comparison groups (see Table 4).

Table 3
Selected characteristics of the participating students (N=952)

Characteristic	Experiment	Comparison	Total	χ^2	*p*
Gender					
Male	221(45.9)	252(53.5)	473(49.7)		
Female	260(54.1)	219(46.5)	479(50.3)	5.44	.02
Home literacy resource					
None	2(0.4)	1(0.2)	3(0.3)		
1-10	27(5.6)	32(6.8)	59(6.2)		
11-50	130(27.0)	105(22.3)	235(24.7)		
51-100	111(23.1)	104(22.1)	215(22.6)		
101-200	77(16.0)	69(14.6)	146(15.3)		
More than 200	134(27.9)	160(34.0)	294(30.9)	6.28	.28
Confidence in attending college					
Weak (1-4)	35(7.3)	45(9.6)	80(8.4)		
Average (5-7)	258(53.6)	224(47.6)	482(50.6)		
Strong (8-10)	188(39.1)	202(42.9)	390(41.0)	4.05	.13
Mother's education					
No schooling	2(0.4)	2(0.4)	4(0.4)		
Elementary school	67(13.9)	57(12.1)	124(13.0)		
Junior high school	94(19.5)	75(15.9)	169(17.8)		
Senior high school	203(42.2)	193(41.0)	396(41.6)		
Junior college	40(8.3)	54(11.5)	94(9.9)		
College	67(13.9)	82(17.4)	149(15.7)		
Graduate school	8(1.7)	8(1.7)	16(1.7)	6.69	.35
Father's education					
No schooling	2(0.4)	4(0.8)	6(0.6)		
Elementary school	42(8.7)	37(7.9)	79(8.3)		
Junior high school	82(17.0)	71(15.1)	153(16.1)		
Senior high school	175(36.4)	157(33.3)	332(34.9)		
Junior college	74(15.4)	69(14.6)	143(15.0)		
College	84(17.5)	103(21.9)	187(19.6)		
Graduate school	22(4.6)	30(6.4)	52(5.5)	5.98	.43
Extracurricular participation					
4 or more days a week	55(11.4)	53(11.3)	108(11.3)		
1 to 3 days a week	139(28.9)	132(28.0)	271(28.5)		
A few times each month	155(32.2)	146(31.0)	301(31.6)		
Never or almost never	132(27.4)	140(29.7)	272(28.6)	.62	.89
Mass Media Exposure					
low (1-2 times a week)	125(26.0)	102(21.7)	227(23.8)		
average (3-5 times a week)	305(63.4)	317(67.3)	622(65.3)		
high (6-7 times a week)	51(10.6)	52(11.0)	103(10.8)	2.47	.29

Note: percentages are listed in parentheses

Table 4
t-test of pretest civic skills and the four dimensions of civic dispositions

Variable	Group	Mean	SD	*t* (df = 951)	*p*
Civic skills	Experiment	3.46	.86		
	Comparison	3.60	.80	-2.631	.009**
Political interest	Experiment	3.40	.87		
	Comparison	3.55	.86	-2.713	.007**
Propensity to participate	Experiment	3.60	.78		
	Comparison	3.67	.72	-1.485	.138
Commitment of rights and responsibilities of citizenship	Experiment	5.22	.51		
	Comparison	5.19	.53	1.045	.296
Sense of political efficacy	Experiment	4.48	.84		
	Comparison	4.41	.81	1.279	.201

**$p < .01$ (2-tailed).

Research Procedures

The study combined both quantitative and qualitative data to form an in-depth understanding of the effect of *Project Citizen* upon the civic skills and dispositions of Taiwanese high school students, the factors influencing its effectiveness, and teachers' perceptions of *Project Citizen*. The procedures employed are described below.

Preparation of Teaching Materials. Although the *Project Citizen* student text and teacher's guide had been translated into Simplified Chinese, for adoption in Taiwan some idioms and phrases required modification. Starting in December 2000, the researcher began to revise the Taiwanese edition of *Project Citizen* student text and teacher's guide. The revised student text and teacher's guide were given to two high school teachers for reviewing, and revisions were made based on their suggestions. In addition, the Complex Chinese edition of the *Project Citizen* student text was read by two Taiwanese high school students to ensure its language appropriateness.

Selection and Training of Teachers. Based on the awareness that teachers play critical roles in any education enterprise; the researcher conducted a 3-day workshop on *Project Citizen* for the teachers who expressed interest to learn and to teach *Project Citizen*. The 3-day workshop was intended to provide participants with the methodology and content necessary for implementing *Project Citizen*.

Obtaining Consents from Participants. Before the experiment all participants were informed about the purpose of this study. Informed consent forms were given to the teachers as well as to the parents of the participating students. They were assured that their participation would be voluntary, and that, if they decide to participate, they could withdraw from the study at any time.

Pretest. The pretest was administered to all students before the experimental classes' students engaged in *Project Citizen*; the pretest was administered during regular class time by the participating teachers. On average, the pretest took 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

Intervention Stage. After the students in both the experimental and comparison classes took the pretest, the experimental students began to receive issues-based instruction using *Project Citizen* as an adjunct to traditional instruction of *Civics* or *Three Principles of the People*. In contrast to the experimental students, the comparison students received traditional, discipline-based instruction of *Civics* or *Three Principles of the People* based upon the hierarchical model of knowledge acquisition.

Because of the large sample size and geographic distribution of the participating classes, direct observation of these classes was difficult to conduct. To ensure that the participating teachers followed important guidelines and procedures as specified in *Project Citizen* text, a checklist was developed and given to each participating teacher. The participating teachers were asked to record the progress of the class at each stage of the implementation process, in addition to any changes in instruction. They were also asked to write down all of their questions and concerns. To ensure that problems and difficulties were resolved promptly, regular communications with the participating teachers were conducted via various methods such as mail, emails, and phone calls.

Information gathered from the mail, emails, phone calls and the checklists, as well as the teacher interviews (which will be described below) were taken as supporting evidence that the participating teachers followed the important guidelines specified in the *Project Citizen* text and the procedures of this study.

Posttest. The posttest (same as pretest) was administered to all students immediately following the completion of the class portfolios by the experimental classes. Again, the test took approximately 15 to 20 minutes for completion and was administered during regular class time by the participating teachers.

Teacher Interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the 13 participating teachers between December 22, 2001 and February 4, 2002. The interviews with twelve teachers were conducted in person. Each teacher interview lasted for about 40 to 70 minutes. All of the interviews were audio-taped with the interviewees' permission.

Instrumentation

Pretest and posttest questionnaire. In order to evaluate *Project Citizen*'s effect on the civic skills and dispositions of Taiwanese adolescent students, quantitative methods were supplemented with qualitative data. A pretest-posttest design was used for the quantitative aspect of this study.

Based on the work of previous researchers (Ehman, 1969b; Vontz et al, 2000; Harwood, 1991; Angell, 1990; Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 1995; Jennings & Niemi, 1974), a Likert-type questionnaire with scales measuring students' civic skills and dispositions was constructed and was administered. The questionnaire was assessed for content validity, face validity, and construct validity using data from the pilot-, pre- and post-tests. Reliability tests conducted from the pilot-, pre- and post-tests produced a Cronbach's α of .76 and greater for all scales. Table 5 listed the reliability coefficients for pretest and posttest.

Table 5
Reliability coefficients for pretest and posttest

Scale	Alpha	
	Pretest	Posttest
Civic skills	.91 (11)	.92 (11)
Civic dispositions	.87 (38)	.88 (38)
Political interest	.85 (9)	.83 (9)
Political efficacy	.76 (6)	.78 (6)
Propensity to participate	.81 (12)	.83 (12)
Commitment to rights and responsibilities of citizenship	.80 (11)	.86 (11)

Note: Item numbers are listed in parentheses.

Interview Protocol. The interview protocol consisted of four parts. The first part of the interview was designed to provide a general understanding of the schools where *Project Citizen* was implemented. The second part was for the purpose of establishing the context of the participating teachers' experience. The third part of the interview focused on understanding the characteristics of the sampled classes and students. The final part of the interview encouraged the participating teachers to reflect on the meaning of their experiences teaching *Project Citizen*.

All participating teachers were interviewed after their class completed *Project Citizen*. Data gathered from interviews were used to obtain insight into the changes in students' civic skills and dispositions, to better understand the teachers' experience with *Project Citizen*, and to provide suggestions for adopting *Project Citizen* to the Taiwanese educational context.

Data Analysis

The data collected from this study were categorized as quantitative and qualitative and were subjected to different treatments. The quantitative data gathered using the questionnaires were analyzed using SAS® version 8 (SAS Institute Inc., 1999) and SPSS® version 10 (SPSS Inc., 1999) in the Windows 2000 environment. The data from the teacher interviews were interpreted qualitatively according to the four prescribed themes.

Quantitative Data Analysis. In this study intact classes were nested in the experimental conditions, therefore, Hierarchical Analysis of Covariance (Hierarchical ANCOVA) was used to test Project Citizen's effect on adolescent students' civic skills and dispositions. The use of hierarchical design enables the researcher to isolate the nuisance variable of classes, which might affect students' civic skills and dispositions. It also incorporates the inherent hierarchical structure of the data into the analysis. Finally, standard multiple regression analysis (SMR) was conducted to explore factors associated with the effect of *Project Citizen* in Taiwan. All hypotheses were tested at an alpha level of .05.

Qualitative Data Analysis. All teacher interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and translated, if necessary, into English. The interview transcripts were carefully examined according to four prescribed themes pertaining to the implementation of *Project Citizen*: 1) teachers' attitudes toward *Project Citizen*, 2) *Project Citizen*'s advantages to students, 3) challenges of implementing *Project Citizen*, and 4) suggestions for adopting *Project Citizen* in Taiwan.

Findings

Effect of *Project Citizen* on Adolescent Civic Skills and Dispositions

The results of *Project Citizen*'s effect on adolescents' civic skills and dispositions are summarized in Table 6. Statistically, results of the Hierarchical ANCOVA showed that, after adjusting for the difference of civic skills pretest, the experimental group significantly outperformed the comparison group. With regard to the four dimensions of civic dispositions, students in the experimental group significantly outperformed the comparison group in political interest and commitment to the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. However, no significant differences were found in the students' propensity to participate in future political life and sense of political efficacy.

Table 6
Hierarchical ANCOVA summary for civic skills and dispositions subscales

Source	SS	df	MS	*F*	*p*
Civic skills					
Group	7.08	1	7.08	10.23	.0021**
Class (Group)	15.22	22	.69	1.75	.0099
Error	366.41	927	.40		
Political interest					
Group	1.81	1	1.81	3.71	.0335*
Class (Group)	10.75	22	.49	1.26	.0933
Error	358.60	927	.39		
Propensity to participate					
Group	1.13	1	1.13	2.55	NS [a]
Class (Group)	9.75	22	.44	1.66	.0144
Error	247.51	927	.27		
Commitment to rights and responsibilities of citizenship					
Group	4.85	1	4.85	6.01	.0113*
Class (Group)	17.79	22	.81	2.91	< .0001
Error	257.29	927	.28		
Sense of political efficacy					
Group	.99	1	.99	1.27	NS [a]
Class (Group)	17.29	22	.79	1.59	.0209
Error	458.65	927	.49		

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (one-tailed)

[a] Not significant at $\alpha = .05$.

To evaluate the practical significance of *Project Citizen*, the most popular measure of strength of association for fixed treatment effects, omega squared (ω^2), was calculated. Practically, *Project Citizen* had large associations with students' perceived civic skills (ω^2= .42), political interest (ω^2= .17), and commitment to rights and responsibilities of citizenship (ω^2= .28) [3].

Factors associated with *Project Citizen*'s effect

Two separate SMR using standardized residuals in civic skills and another in civic dispositions as the dependent variables were performed. The independent variables were students' gender, grade level, confidence in attending college, home literacy resource, parent education, frequency of extracurricular participation, teachers' participation in the *Project Citizen* workshop, teachers' education, teaching experience, classroom climate, and students' exposure to news of various mass media resources.

Civic Skills. Table 7 displays the unstandarized regression coefficients (b) and intercept, standard error (SE), the standarardized regression coefficients (β), the squared semipartial correlations (sr_i^2) and R^2, and adjusted R^2. As shown, R for regression was significantly different from zero. F (11, 469) = 4.552, $p < .01$.

Table 7
Standard multiple regression of factors associated with the effect of Project Citizen on the civic skills of Taiwanese adolescent students

Variable	b	SE	β	sr_i^2	t	P
Intercept	-2.045	.509			-4.016	<.001
Gender	.075	.097	.038	<.001	.778	.437
Grade level	.090	.109	.044	.002	.828	.408
Confidence in attending college	.005	.021	.012	.006	.248	.804
Home literacy resource	.011	.039	.014	.001	.277	.782
Parent education	-.009	.043	-.010	<.001	-.205	.837
Extracurricular participation	-.033	.046	-.033	.001	-.730	.466
Teacher training of PC	.034	.064	.028	<.001	.531	.596
Teacher education	.083	.072	.071	<.001	1.150	.251
Teaching experience	.022	.009	.109	.014	2.366	.018*
Classroom climate	.190	.063	.139	.026	3.029	.003**
Mass media exposure	.160	.033	.229	.045	4.845	<.001**
Model	R = .311 R^2 = .096 adjusted R^2 = .075 F (11, 469) = 4.552, $p < .01$					

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed)

[3] According to Cohen (1988), the following guidelines are suggested for interpreting strength of association: ω^2 = .010 is a small association, ω^2 = .059 is a medium association, and ω^2 = .138 or larger is a large association.

Only three of the predictor variables contributed significantly to predictions of the effect of *Project Citizen* on the civic skills of Taiwanese adolescent students, teacher's teaching experience (sr_i^2 = 1.4%), classroom climate (sr_i^2 = 2.6%), and mass media exposure (sr_i^2 = 4.5%). The 11 predictor variables in combination contributed to another 1.1% in shared variability. Altogether, 9.6% (7.5% adjusted) of the variability in effect of *Project Citizen* was predicted by knowing scores from these 11 predictor variables.

Civic Dispositions. Table 8 displays the unstandarized regression coefficients (*b*) and intercept, standard error (SE), the standarardized regression coefficients (β), the squared semipartial correlations (sr_i^2) and R^2, and adjusted R^2. As shown, *R* for regression was significantly different from zero. $F(11, 469) = 4.905$, $p < .01$.

Only three of the predictor variables contributed significantly to predictions of the effect of *Project Citizen* on the civic dispositions of Taiwanese adolescent students, students' confidence in attending college (sr_i^2 = 2.2%), classroom climate (sr_i^2 = 4.1%), and mass media exposure (sr_i^2 = 2.5%). The 11 predictor variables in combination contributed to another 1.5% in shared variability. Altogether, 10.3% (8.2% adjusted) of the variability in effect of *Project Citizen* was predicted by knowing scores from these 11 predictor variables.

Table 8

Standard multiple regression of factors associated with the effect of Project Citizen on the civic dispositions of Taiwanese adolescent students

Variable	*b*	SE	β	sr_i^2	*t*	*p*
Intercept	-1.600	.507			-3.153	.002
Gender	.146	.097	.073	<.001	1.510	.132
Grade level	.082	.109	.040	.002	.756	.450
Confidence in attending college	.046	.021	.105	.022	2.188	.029*
Home literacy resource	-.042	.039	-.055	.001	-1.094	.275
Parent education	-.043	.042	-.051	<.001	-1.011	.313
Extracurricular participation	-.076	.046	-.075	.007	-1.688	.096
Teacher training of PC	-.023	.064	-.019	.003	-.361	.718
Teacher education	.035	.072	.030	<.001	.487	.627
Teaching experience	-.007	.009	-.036	<.001	-.795	.427
Classroom climate	.259	.062	.190	.041	4.148	<.001**
Mass media exposure	.119	.033	.169	.025	3.598	<.001**
Model	$R = .321$ $R^2 = .103$ adjusted $R^2 = .082$ $F(11, 469) = 4.905$, $p < .01$					

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed)

Analysis of Qualitative Data

Qualitative analyses of the teacher interviews revealed that all participating teachers responded positively toward *Project Citizen* and showed interest in implementing it again in their classes. The results also suggested, however, that time constraints, students' abilities, and the pre from the Joint College Entrance Examination, among other factors, pose significant challenges to implementing *Project Citizen* in the Taiwanese context. Valuable suggestions to address these challenges, such as correlating *Project Citizen* with current curriculum frameworks and simplifyi the procedures and materials, were provided by the participating teachers.

Discussion

Effect of *Project Citizen* on Adolescent Civic Skills and Dispositions

The quantitative and qualitative analyses of this study indicted that there was a differenc the civic skills of Taiwanese adolescent students according to the treatment of *Project Citizen* in conjunction with traditional *Civics* or *Three Principles of the People* instruction or traditional *Civ Three Principles of the People* instruction alone. *Project Citizen* in conjunction with traditional or *Three Principles of the People* instruction is more effective than traditional *Civics* and *Three Principles of the People* instruction in promoting students' civic skills. As indicated previously, intended outcome of *Project Citizen* is on the development of those civic skills and dispositions enable and motivate responsible political participation in civic life. Students participating in *Pro Citizen* are encouraged to practice a variety of intellectual and participatory skills through their participation in the program. The results of this study support the intended outcome of *Project C* Through the process of identifying a school or community issue, evaluating possible solutions, selecting and defending a class policy, and developing an action plan, the intellectual and partici skills of students are enhanced. As such, this study confirms Soule's (2000) and Tolo's (1998) su studies, the recent quasi-experimental study by Vontz et al. (2000), and Liou's (2002) case study mentioned in the literature review, these studies concluded that *Project Citizen* does have a posit effect on the civic skills, both intellectual and participatory, of adolescent students. This study le support for this claim.

In addition to the civic skills of Taiwanese adolescent students, *Project Citizen* was also to have a significant positive effect on two dimensions of the civic dispositions of Taiwanese adolescent students: political interest and commitment to the rights and responsibilities of citizer As mentioned previously, the goal of *Project Citizen* is to motivate and empower adolescents to exercise their rights and to accept the responsibilities of democratic citizenship through the inter study of a local community problem that is relevant and is of concern to them. Therefore, the significant positive effect of *Project Citizen* on the political interest and commitment to rights a responsibility of citizenship of Taiwanese adolescents is expected. This instructional expectatio

confirmed by the results of this study, therefore, validates the findings of Liou (2002), Soule (2000) and Tolo (1998).

In contrast to the significant findings of political interest and commitment to the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, a significant positive effect of *Project Citizen* was not found in the following two dimensions: propensity to participate in future political life and sense of political efficacy. This result is inconsistent with previous research (Liou, 2002; Soule, 2000; Tolo, 1998) that suggested *Project Citizen* helps students to foster a sense of competence and efficacy. Although examination of the descriptive data from this study indicates that the experimental students scored higher than the comparison students in the two dimensions of civic dispositions, the difference is not great enough to be considered significant. Several reasons might account for the insignificant result. It is possible that one semester is too brief a period of time to greatly alter the attitudes and beliefs into which students have been socialized over a much longer period of time. It is also possible that the priority placed upon passing the college entrance examination contributed to this finding of insignificant effect. As noted earlier, the vast majority of Taiwanese feel that a young person's first priority in life is to achieve a high score on the Joint College Entrance Examination (JCEE) and nothing is more important than being admitted to a good college. Accordingly, students are not motivated to participate in political life. Another possible explanation was revealed from the teacher interviews. According to most participating teachers, students' thinking abilities and participation skills are rarely exercised and challenged; therefore, they are not confident in their ability to influence public policy. Although by participating in *Project Citizen* students are offered the opportunity to practice the abilities and skills that are conducive to civic participation, they still have inadequate confidence in their ability to make a difference in political affairs.

Factors associated with *Project Citizen*'s Effect

Classroom climate is one of the two significant variables that were positively related to the effect of *Project Citizen* on both the civic skills and dispositions of Taiwanese adolescents. The findings of this study confirm that of most studies concerning the relationship between classroom climate and civic development: the more open the classroom climate, the better the civic development of the students (Baughman, 1975; Blankshenship, 1990; Ehman, 1969a, 1969b, 1970, 1980; Hahn & Tocci, 1990; Harwood, 1991; Torney-Purta, et al., 2001). The highly interactive nature of the learning processes involved in *Project Citizen* suggests that the program is well-suited to fostering civic development through the creation of a more open classroom climate.

Another significant predictor variable to the effect of *Project Citizen* on the civic skills and dispositions is students' exposure to news of various media resources. Using a joint index of exposure to news of various media resources, the result of this study supports most of the research findings in the United States indicating that higher exposure to news is associated with advanced civic development (Chaffee & Becker, 1975, Chaffee, Jackson-Beeck, Durall, & Wilson, 1977; Connell,

1971; Dominick, 1972; Garramone & Atkin, 1986, Porter, 1978). The joint index is also more reliable and powerful than a single index to detect the positive relationship between media exposure and adolescent civic development (Cheng, 2001) or the effect of a specific civic instruction (Chen, 1995).

Teacher's teaching experience appeared to be statistically significant but less influential on *Project Citizen's* effect on adolescent civic skills. The result of this study lends support to previous studies that the more experienced teachers help their students to achieve better results (Huang, 1997) but the relationship was not very clear for students in higher grades (NAEP, 1999). In this study student's confidence in attending college was found to be related to *Project Citizen's* effect on adolescent civic dispositions. It is possible that students who have less confidence of attending college are students who are struggling and need to study even harder to ensure that they will be admitted to college. Consequently, as compared with students of stronger confidence in attending college, students of less confidence are less attentive and committed to political affairs around them.

The remaining variables, students' gender, grade level, confidence in attending college (significant predictor only for civic dispositions), home literacy resource, parent education, frequency of extracurricular participation, and teachers' participation in the *Project Citizen* workshop, teachers' education, and teaching experience (significant predictor only for civic skills), were not significantly related to the effect of *Project Citizen*. Previous studies have suggested that these factors seemed to be related to adolescent civic development. However, these variables were not found to be related to the effect of *Project Citizen*. These factors might, indeed, be related to adolescent civic development to varying degrees. However, in this study, standardized residual gain scores were used as the criterion variable, and it is possible that the impact of these factors was not large enough to suggest significant relationships, or that the influence of these factors was ruled out.

Teacher's Perceptions of *Project Citizen*

Because of the detailed materials that *Project Citizen* provides and the advantages that *Project Citizen* brings to the students, teachers responded positively toward *Project Citizen*. However, these teachers faced challenges such as time constraints, students' inadequate abilities, pressure from the JCEE, curriculum integration, topic selections, uncertainty of the implementation schedule of *Project Citizen*, lack of sample portfolios, and limited resources available to their students. Such difficulties might limit their motivation to include *Project Citizen* in their class. Some of the challenges such as curriculum integration, topic selections, and uncertainty of the implementation schedule of *Project Citizen* were also found in Tolo's (1998) study of *Project Citizen*'s users in the United States. Other obstacles such as time constraints, students' inadequate abilities, external pressure from the JCEE, and limited resources available to the students may be unique to the Taiwanese context.

In order to address these challenges, valuable suggestions were provided by the participating teachers. Their suggestions included: 1) simplifying the procedures and materials, 2) revising the translation of *Project Citizen*, 3) providing a list of suggested *Project Citizen* topics, 4) providing

concrete sample portfolios, 5) correlating *Project Citizen* with current curriculum frameworks, 6) initiating the *Project Citizen* portfolio competition, 7) offering *Project Citizen* teacher training, 8) providing a suggested syllabus and schedule, 9) developing a manual for inexperienced teachers, and 10) establishing an advisory network. Because *Project Citizen* is a new curriculum in Taiwan, these recommendations will help to familiarize teachers and students with the features of the new program. In addition, given the stress from the JCEE and the demands upon teachers and students, some of these recommendations address the unique culture of high school life in Taiwan. These suggestions are critical to the successful adoption of *Project Citizen* in Taiwan.

Implications for Social Studies Education

Traditionally, in school, we are taught to view society as stable and basically peaceful. In reality, our society is dynamic, and filled with tensions and contradictions. Such turmoil and contradictions are reflected in the experiences of youth life beyond the school walls. Increasingly, awareness of these tensions in social life is being reflected within the practices of the school, but the school continues to lag behind society. A social studies curriculum oriented toward social change and the resolution of tensions and conflicts is not "merely" more relevant and realistic to the students than is the conventional curriculum; to the extent that it corresponds more closely to the reality the student experiences beyond the realm of school, an issues-centered social studies curriculum better equips the student to engage the dilemmas of public life as an effective democratic citizen.

Both the quantitative and qualitative analyses of data support previous research that *Project Citizen* has positive impacts upon adolescent civic development. The finding that *Project Citizen* enhanced adolescent civic skills and dispositions suggests the positive implications of the issues-centered curriculum. For those social studies educators who accept the assumption that teaching for informed and responsible participation should be the major goal of social studies education, this research offers support for the hope that their goal is attainable. Further, this study suggests directions in which social studies curriculum reform might move to promote the citizenship ideal.

An implication valuable for adopting *Project Citizen* in Taiwan follows from the findings that classroom climate and students' exposure to news of various media resources are positively related to the effect of *Project Citizen* on adolescent civic skills and dispositions. This is not to suggest that these are the only factors that are related to *Project Citizen*'s effect, but rather to lend support to the findings of previous research studies. When students perceive their classroom to be an open environment, one in which students are encouraged to explore and express differing views related to public issues, civics instruction has a beneficial influence upon students' civic skills and dispositions. This being the case, social studies educators should examine classroom climate and instructional practices in an effort to identify those aspects that hold potential for incorporating the modes of inquiry and discourse suited to democratic life. In addition, when students are exposed to the news coverage from various media sources, they are able to examine diverse views concerning substantive public issues. This, in turn,

may have a favorable impact upon their civic skills and dispositions. Implementing *Project Citizen* in the Taiwanese high school, this study's findings suggest, can contribute significantly to this effort to more closely align the practices of the social studies classroom with the imperatives of civic life in a modern democratic society.

In addition to support for *Project Citizen*, an issues-centered curriculum, this study provides a basis for comparison of different cultures. By incorporating the perspectives of the participating teachers, this study points out the need to take into account the potential cultural variations in the adoption of curricular programs. The format and process of implementing *Project Citizen* as conducted in the United States, these teachers indicated, are not entirely applicable to the Taiwanese high school context. Although various studies have shown many positive impacts of *Project Citizen* on adolescent civic development, this does not mean that *Project Citizen* can be adopted without any difficulties in Taiwan. In fact, in addition to some challenges experienced universally in using *Project Citizen* (such as curriculum integration, topic selections, uncertainty of the implementation schedule of *Project Citizen*), Taiwan's teachers encountered even more challenges when implementing *Project Citizen*: time constraints, students' inadequate abilities, pressure from the JCEE, and limited resources available to the students. Some of these challenges may be unique to the Taiwanese context; at the very least, to ensure an effective adaptation of *Project Citizen* in Taiwan, the cultural contingencies involved in these factors should be taken into account.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Field observations. Although *Project Citizen* checklists and teacher interviews suggested that the participating teachers followed important procedures specified in the text, to ensure the credibility and internal validity of further studies observation of each of the participating classes is recommended. This is especially crucial for understanding the experiences of participating students and teachers with *Project Citizen*, and the civic meaning they attach to it.

Student interviews. The results of this study suggest that *Project Citizen* positively impacts students' civic skills and two dimensions of civic dispositions: political interest and commitment to the rights and responsibilities of citizenships. However, significant positive effects were not revealed for two of the civic dispositions investigated. It is possible that one semester is too brief a time for changing the ingrained attitudes and habits of mind of students. Although the questionnaires were used to measure the change of students' dispositions and beliefs in the four dimensions of civic dispositions, it is important to listen to the students during and after the semester to obtain their attitudes, beliefs, and views related to their learning. This study focused only on the teachers' perspectives and tried to explore their difficulties of teaching *Project Citizen*. Teachers' perspectives, however, provide only a partial picture of the classroom context. Students' perspectives regarding the processes and effects of *Project Citizen* will be needed in order to establish a full account of the implementation and beneficial effects of *Project Citizen* upon civic development.

Other effects of Project Citizen. Because of the research purpose and the result of the factor analyses, this study evaluated only the effect of *Project Citizen* on civic skills and four dimensions of civic dispositions: political interest, propensity to participate in future political life, commitment to the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and sense of political efficacy. According to the results of the teacher interviews, *Project Citizen* also has other effects on students' cooperative attitudes, self-esteem, and political tolerance. Research replications adding new variables would be valuable for extending our knowledge of *Project Citizen*'s effects upon other character traits conducive to healthy civic participation.

Delayed effect. Another issue that was not addressed in this study was that of the durability of the effects on students. Future research needs to be conducted to determine whether, and for how long, students sustain their newly-gained skills and dispositions. If the changes of skills and dispositions are found to be stable over a long period of time, it is worthwhile to investigate how these changes influence students' future political participation.

Sample of different ages. This study needs to be expanded cross-sectionally. Although *Project Citizen* was originally designed for use in the middle school, the use of the program has not been limited to middle school students. *Project Citizen* has been implemented with students as young as fifth grade and as old as twelfth grade. This study showed that *Project Citizen* had a positive impact on high school students' civic skills and dispositions. To expand the generalizability of *Project Citizen's* impact, it would be worthwhile to implement the program in elementary and junior high school social studies classes and to measure its effects on a population whose civic skills and dispositions are presumably more malleable than those of their high school counterparts.

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